

# LANERCOST PRIORY



John R. H. Moorman, M.A., D.D.



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by  
John R.H. Moorman  
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Photographs by Marc Alexander



*A pencil sketch of Lanercost Priory drawn in 1845 by Mary Gipps (1825-1898.) The youngest daughter of the Rev. Henry Gipps, who was vicar of Corbridge from 1829 to 1853, she received art lessons from Ruskin.*

# Lanercost

Open the arch'd door, you are confronted by height,  
And great designs that, though they are mutilated,  
Still remember that they are meant to convey  
GOD, and the height and depth of Eternal Being.  
And if long past ambition and earthly hopes  
Were mixed in the project that built this towering nave,  
Yet behind lies some conception, some aim at Truth,  
Some dignity of the Spirit, seeking to make  
A stronghold for GOD. This purity of the lancets,  
This rhythm of the arcading, these chisel'd stones,  
This Church o'erpowering its handful of worshippers,  
As it has done, year after storied year,  
This staunch severity, gentled by its beauty,  
Still, in its clear and lofty silences,  
Its building and making, utters the Holy Name.

M. B. CROPPER

## Foreword

*Dr. J.R.H. Moorman's excellent Guide Book has been in its present form for over thirty years. Many thousands of visitors to Lanercost find it an invaluable help as they look round the Priory and to take home as a memento of their visit. The Guide gives much useful information without being too technical. Apart from the section on the heraldic curtains, added in 1967, the text has remained unaltered.*

*As the time has come for another reprint, we have decided to keep Dr. Moorman's text but to present the booklet in a more attractive form. All the photographs in this edition are new. For these and art work, as well as much other helpful guidance, we are indebted to Mr. Marc Alexander.*

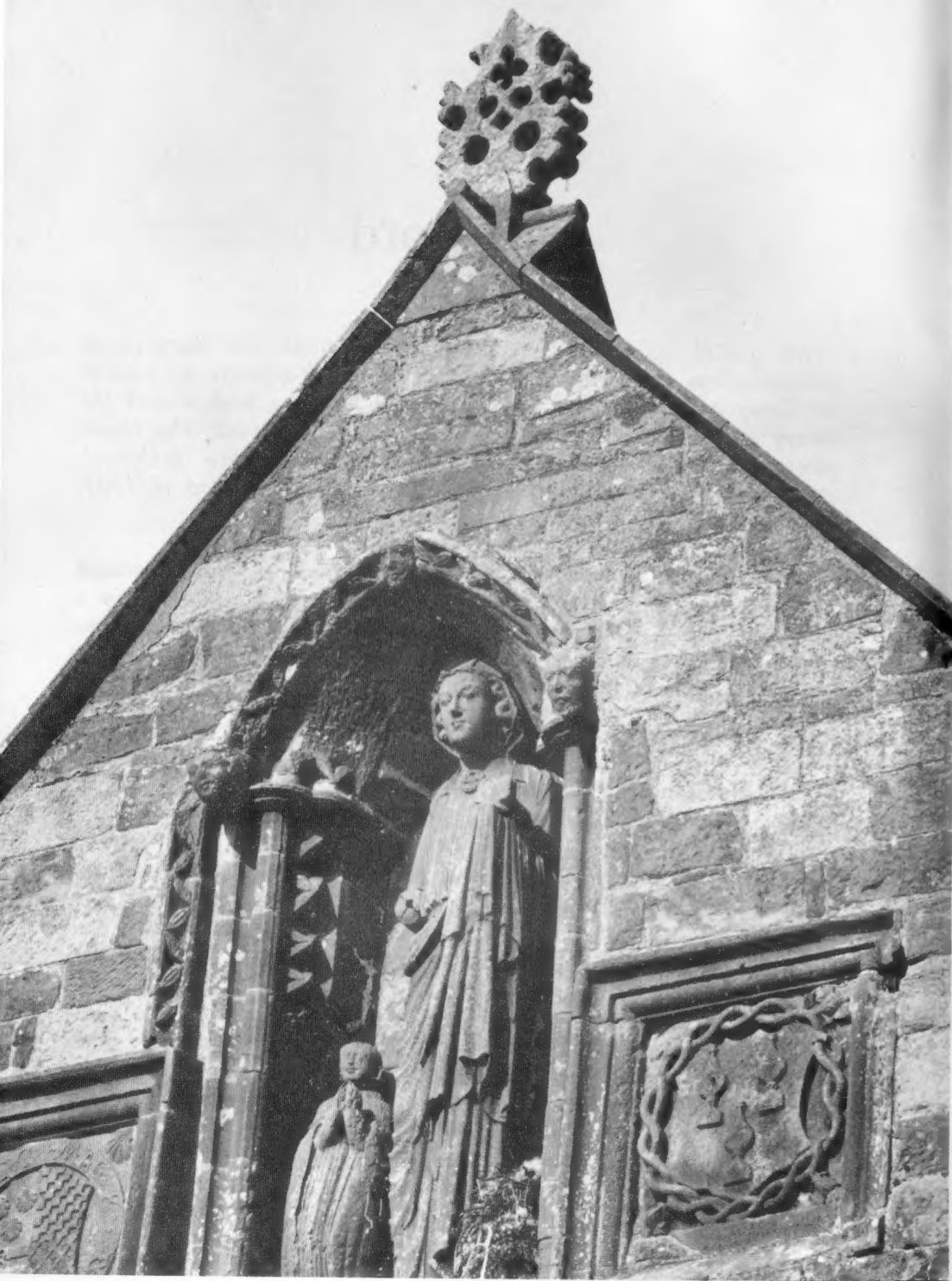
*We again gratefully acknowledge a poem on Lanercost by the late Miss Margaret Cropper, and we thank the Department of the Environment for the use of its ground plan.*

*The present year, 1976, is memorable because after fifteen years of appeal we have been able to complete Phase 1. of the Parish Church Restoration at a cost of £20,000. This has been carried out to arrest movement in the Roof and the South Wall of the Nave. Phase 2., strengthening the South West Corner, cannot be attempted until funds are available.*

*We are most grateful to benefactors and visitors who have given for this work of Restoration. It is due to this generosity that we have been able to accomplish what we have. On the generosity of the future depends our ability to embark on Phase 2.*

Wilfrid Braithwaite  
Vicar of Lanercost.

August, 1976



*Statue of St. Mary Magdalene*

## PART ONE

### A HISTORY OF LANERCOST

#### 1. THE FOUNDATION OF LANERCOST PRIORY

Anyone coming to Lanercost and knowing nothing of its history might be surprised to find the remains of so large a Church standing here in this quiet countryside of isolated farms and cottages. The explanation is that Lanercost Priory was not built as a parish church, but as one of a large number of monastic houses which, to the total number of about 900 were scattered all over England during the Middle Ages.

Lanercost Priory was founded about the year 1166. Some ten years before this date, Henry II had granted the Barony of Gilsland to Sir Hubert de Vaux (or Vallibus), who, on his death in 1165, left it to his son, Robert. Robert seems to have made immediate preparations for the founding of a religious house somewhere on his estates. The old story that he was inspired to do this as an act of penance for the murder of his enemy, Gilles de Bueth, of Castle Steads, has no authority behind it. The most probable explanation is that, like many other people of his generation, he wished to establish a community of men to pray for the soul of his father.

So, about the year 1166, negotiations were made for the foundation of a house of Augustinian Canons, Saint Mary Magdalene being chosen as patron saint. Sir Robert de Vaux provided the Canons with a generous endowment. The foundation Charter gives them a long strip of land between the Roman Wall and the River Irthing and between Burtholme Beck and some point higher up the valley. They also received considerable stretches of land in the parishes of Walton, Farlam, and Brampton, together with the main part of the incomes of five parish churches – Walton (with the chapel at Triermain), Irthington, Brampton, Carlatton and Farlam.

With this ample endowment it was possible for the Canons to start building on a large scale; and, by 1200, the Eastern part of the Church was built, together with most of the monastic buildings.

The Nave of the Church was built shortly after the year 1200, and the whole thing finished by 1220.

As soon as the buildings were fit for habitation, some Canons were brought – probably from the Priory of Pentney in Norfolk – and settled in Lanercost. They and their successors remained here for roughly 370 years until the Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1536.





*Part of the Prior's House*

## 2. AUGUSTINIAN CANONS

A word must now be said about Augustinian Canons and their mode of life.

The Order of Saint Augustine was introduced into England about the year 1100. Members of this Order were not monks, and would never have referred to themselves as such. The word "monk" was confined to men belonging to certain Orders of which the chief were the Benedictines and Cistercians. The Augustinian Canons were "regular canons" living under a Rule of Life which was largely based upon the writings of St. Augustine (A.D. 345–430). In the year 1200 there were 165 Augustinian monasteries in England, including the neighbouring houses of Carlisle and Hexham.

In spite of the size of the buildings, there were probably never more than twelve or fifteen Canons at Lanercost. They were presided over by a PRIOR, who lived in his own house, worshipped in his own private chapel, and kept his own servants. Under him came the SUB-PRIOR, who acted as his deputy when he was away, and then such officers as the CELLARER, who looked after the catering; the SACRIST, who was responsible for the upkeep of the Church and the ordering of the services; the CHAMBERLAIN, who managed the Canon's clothes, and the HOSTELLER, whose duty it was to receive and care for any guests.

The centre of the monastery was the Cloister, where the Canons spent a certain amount of time each day in reading and writing. All the other buildings stood round the Cloister – the Church on the North side, the Dormitory and Chapter House on the East, the Refectory on the South, and various storerooms, offices and servants' quarters on the West.

## 3. THE DAILY SERVICES

Since the main purpose of the Canons' lives was the worship of God, we



*The Priory from the North-East*

shall expect to find this time occupying a considerable part of each day. The occupants of the religious houses were "professional worshippers", that is to say, men and women whose occupation and profession it was to pray. In these days, when, even among devout people, prayer occupies only a small fraction of each day, it may seem strange that men should have been content to make prayer the main purpose of their lives. Yet, from the early days of the Christian Church down to the sixteenth century, the life of devotion was regarded in this country as a perfectly natural and indeed noble vocation for any man or woman. And who could say that they were wrong?

At Lanercost, as at all Augustinian houses, worship filled up about seven or eight hours each day.

The circle of Prayer and Praise began at midnight with the services of MATTINS and LAUDS. After this the Canons returned to bed until daybreak, when PRIME was sung, followed by the FIRST MASS. About 9-0 o'clock they sang TERCE, with HIGH MASS at 10-0; SEXT came about 11-0, with dinner

shortly after at 12-0. NONE was sung during the afternoon, and EVENSONG about two hours later. Then came supper and COMPLINE and so to bed.

The daily performance of this series of services naturally left only a short time for other occupations, which had to be fitted into the spaces between the services (see the Monastic Time-Table on p.26 ). The main activity of the Canons apart from worship, was either literary work such as reading and copying manuscripts, or administrative work connected with the monastic estates, which were constantly expanding during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

#### 4. THE PRIORY DURING THE MIDDLE AGES

Such was the kind of life lived here from about 1166 to 1536. On the whole, it was quiet and uneventful. Its main feature was Discipline. On entering a monastery, a man deliberately sacrificed his freedom and accepted the restrictions which the Rule laid upon him. His day was planned out for him; his clothes and his food were provided for him out of the common fund; his little world was restricted to the few acres surrounded by the monastery wall. The world outside was as a foreign country which he seldom or never visited, and of whose concerns he was almost totally ignorant. Within the monastery, life flowed quietly on with little to disturb its serenity. Occasionally some incident would occur, such as a visitation by the Bishop or the election of a new Prior, which would, for a time, arouse some excitement. But for the most part, life was uneventful. Prayer and work and prayer again kept the Canons fully occupied, the only variation in the routine being that provided by the changing seasons of the Church's year.

At Lanercost, however, life was much less undisturbed than in most of the monastic houses. Lying within a few miles of the Border between England and Scotland, the Priory was constantly being treated either as a convenient military headquarters or as a place to be robbed and despoiled. Between 1280 and 1350, Lanercost was constantly visited by both friend and foe, with results which were shattering both to the peaceful life of the Canons and to their material prosperity.

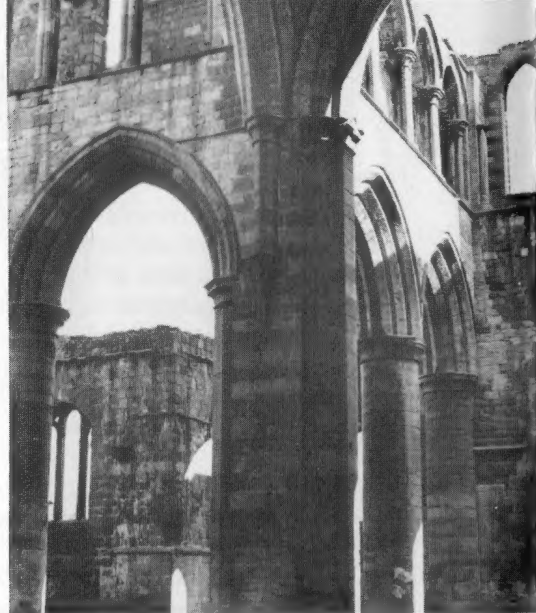
In 1280, King Edward I and Queen Eleanor visited Lanercost on their way to Newcastle. On this visit, the King made a present to the Canons of a silk cloth.

In 1296, the Scots overran this part of the country, and both Hexham and Lanercost suffered. At Hexham, they set the Church on fire and, having locked two hundred boys into the Grammar School, burnt them alive. At Lanercost they burned the Cloister. Peter Langcroft, a local poet, wrote:

"Corbrigge is a toun, thei brent it whan thei cam;  
Tuo hous of religioun, Laynercoste and Hexham,  
Thei chaced the chanons out, their goodes bare away,  
And robbed all about; the bestis tok to prey."







*Part of the Choir and South Transept*

No sooner had the Canons repaired the damage than it was again destroyed, this time by William Wallace, in 1297.

In 1300, Edward I was here again on his way to the siege of Caerlaverock. Six years later, in September, 1306, Edward I came to Lanercost on his way to Carlisle. He had intended to stay only a few days; but he was taken ill; winter came on, and he was obliged to remain at the Priory until the following March. The accommodation of the Royal Family and all their household was a large undertaking, and much work had to be done to make the buildings fit for them. A party of about 200 people had to be housed and fed; and there was much coming and going of waggons as well as a hunt for food of every kind in the district. The whole story can be read in the royal account books which are still preserved in the Public Record Office and the British Museum in London. For most of the time the king was ill; and among the records which have been preserved is the chemist's bill for the various drugs which the king required.

Then in 1346 King David II of Scotland came here and ransacked the buildings and desecrated the church.

Life at Lanercost, therefore, was by no means as peaceful as its pious founder had intended. The troubles of the seventy years between 1280 and 1350 left their mark, and for the remaining 200 years of its life the monastery had a hard struggle.

The rebuilding which had to be done after the Scottish invasions used up much of their resources and plunged the Canons into heavy debts. To meet these debts, more and more of the estates had to be sold, and by the sixteenth century the income of the house had fallen to below £80 per annum.

## 5. THE DISSOLUTION

In 1536, Henry VIII, being desperately short of money, made his first attack on the Church and determined to destroy all the smaller monasteries, that is, all that were worth less than £200 a year. Lanercost, therefore, found itself on the "black list"; and, in due course, the Royal Commissioners arrived. Any valuables were confiscated, the Canons who remained were turned out, and the buildings became Royal property until they were handed over, a few years later, to a layman, Sir Thomas Dacre, the illegitimate son of Sir Thomas Dacre, owner of Naworth Castle.

A few of the Canons seem to have taken part in the Pilgrimage of Grace — the North Country's protest against Henry's attack on the Church — for in 1537 the King wrote a savage letter to the Duke of Norfolk in which he told him to go to certain places, of which "Leonerdecoste" was one, and there "without pitie or circumstance . . . cause all the monkes and chanons, that he in anywise faultie, to be tyed uppe (i.e. hanged) without further delaye or ceremony." Whether this order was actually carried out at Lanercost is not known; but the late Prior, John Robyson, cannot have been among the guilty, for he received a State pension of £8 a year and became Rector of Aikton. Probably several others of the Canons eventually obtained livings in the district.



*The Guest House*

## 6. LATER HISTORY OF THE BUILDINGS

As has already been mentioned, the buildings, at the Dissolution, were granted to Sir Thomas Dacre, whose father lived at Naworth Castle. Sir Thomas made some alterations to the monastic buildings in order to convert them into a private dwellinghouse, and came into residence here in 1559.

Meanwhile, the North aisle of the Church was shut off from the rest and used as a parish church, while a parsonage was built for the Vicar.

As for the rest of the monastic buildings, they were allowed to fall into decay, many a local builder finding them a convenient store from which to buy stones, timber and lead for the construction of barns and houses.

The Dacres lived at Lanercost until 1716, when this branch of the family died out. The senior branch continued to live at Naworth, Elizabeth Dacre, the heiress of the estates, marrying, in 1577, Lord William Howard (commonly known as "Bauld Willie," or "Belted Will,") third son of the Duke of Norfolk. His great-grandson, Charles Howard, was created Earl of Carlisle in 1661.

With the disappearance of the Lanercost Dacres, the property, including the ruins of the Priory, passed to the Crown, from whom they were bought by the Earl of Carlisle in 1869. In recent years, the late Lady Cecilia Roberts transferred the custody of them to the Department of the Environment.

About 1740, it was decided to enlarge the space used as a parish church by restoring the Nave. The Eastern arch was blocked by a stone wall pierced with three lights, and the whole of the Nave was roofed in and the windows glazed. The result of this restoration is the handsome Church which is now in use.



*Dacre Hall*



*The West Front*

## PART TWO

### GUIDE TO THE PRIORY

#### 1. THE PRESENT CHURCH and its surroundings

The first thing which the visitor sees on arriving at Lanercost is the remains of the **Gatehouse**. This was the main entrance to the monastery and was a rectangular two-storied building used as a porter's lodge.

As you approach the Church you pass the Vicarage. Most of this was built during the sixteenth century, but the Eastern end, nearest the Church, is the thirteenth century **Guest-House** of the Canons. This was where Edward I and his Queen stayed in 1280, 1300 and 1306, and where Robert Bruce put up in 1311. Notice the fine dog-tooth carving just below the battlements.

A little to the North of the Church is the base of an old Cross, erected in 1214. The upper portion is now inside the Church.



The **West Front** of the Church is a fine example of early English architecture (about 1200–1220). At the top stands a figure of Saint Mary Magdalene, the Patron Saint of the Priory. This was carved about 1270, and bears a close resemblance to certain portions of the “Angel Choir” at Lincoln. It has been suggested that Edward I may have brought a sculptor with him from Lincoln, and presented the Canons with this fine example of his work.

On either side of the statue are coats of arms, that on the left being the arms of Sir Thomas Dacre of Naworth, who died in 1525.

The great West Door, used only on ceremonial occasions in the Middle Ages, leads into the Nave of the Church. Originally, of course, the Church was one – a magnificent structure 178ft. 6ins. in length. It has already been mentioned that the present East wall and window of the Church were put there about 1740

As in so many monastic Churches, there is only one aisle, on the North side. No doubt the Canons would have liked to have had two aisles, but once the Cloister had been built it was impossible to build a South aisle without upsetting the whole design of the monastery.

In the North-West corner of the Nave stands the upper part of the **Cross**, the base of which is outside on the green. Originally it bore the following inscription:—

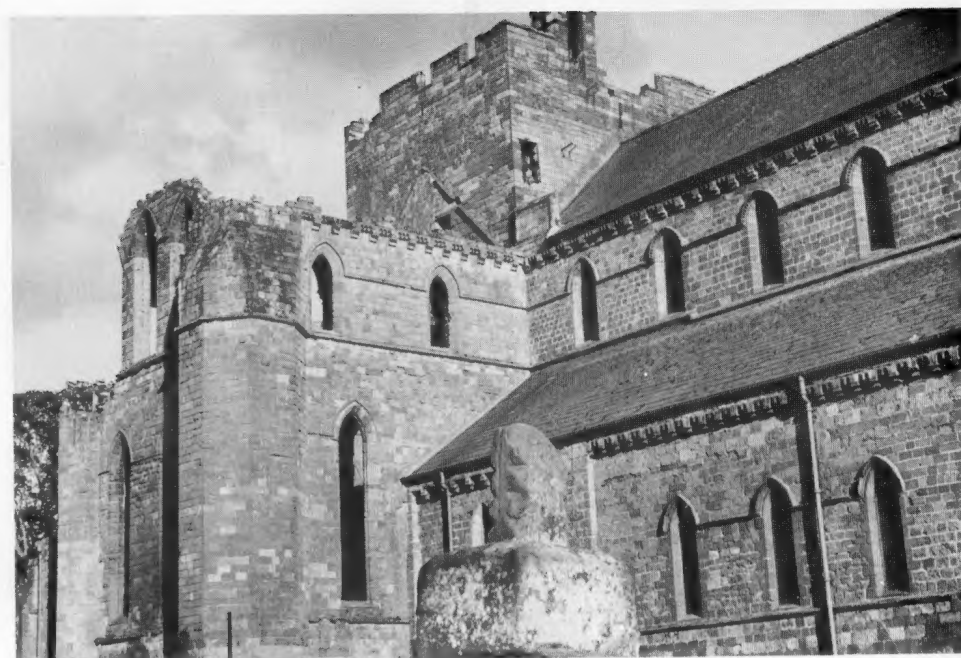
ANNO. AB. INCARNATIONE. MCCXIII. ET. VII. ANNO. INTERDICT.  
OPTINENTE. SEDEM. APLICAM. INNOCENT. III. IMPERANTE. IN.  
ALEMANIA. OTHON. REGNANTE. IN. FRANC. PHILIPPO. IOHE. IN.  
ANGLIA. WILLMO IN SCOTIA. FACTA. II. CRUX.

This was copied down by Lord William Howard of Naworth in 1607, and means:—

“In the 1214th year from the Incarnation and the seventh year of the Interdict, Innocent III holding the Apostolic See, Otto being Emperor in Germany, Philip King of France, John King of England and William King of Scotland, this Cross was made.”

In 1657, part of the inscription was removed and the stone was used for a child's grave. Someone has scratched very roughly the words: “. . . who was buried ye 20 July 1657 2d yere of his age.”

On the wall above the Cross is a stone, placed there by the Rev. George Story in 1761, to commemorate the founding of the Priory. Unfortunately, the



*The Cross base*

date which he gives, 1116 (which he took from Lord William Howard's notes), is about 50 years too early.

In the **North Aisle** are several coloured windows and memorials erected in recent years. Three of the windows are by William Morris and Burne-Jones. The latest window depicting St. Cecilia (Patron Saint of Music and Harmony) in the Lanercost scene is the work of the late Miss Evie Hone of Ireland. It was placed there in memory of Lady Cecilia Maude Roberts. Close to the Organ door is a brass fillet taken from the tomb of Sir Thomas Dacre, now in the ruined part of the Church. The inscription reads as follows:—

“Here lyeth Syr Thomas Dacre Knyght of the gartier the fourth o/... and fornenst scotland to Kyng Henry the vii and Henry viii positu est Ano dm mccccco .../was married to Syr Thom.../w(hich) Elizabeth decessid the xxi day of August The yere of god mccccxvi.”

Sir Thomas died in 1525, but the date was never completed in the inscription.

In the **East Window** are some fragments of sixteenth century coloured glass removed from Dacre Hall, the dining room of Sir Thomas Dacre after the Dissolution. The arms in the middle window Thomas Dacre, showing the “bar



*Shaft of the Lanercost Cross.*



*Window by E. Burne-Jones and W. Morris*

sinister," indicating that he was of illegitimate birth. Under this is a Latin inscription which may be translated:—

"In the year 1559 Sir Thomas Dacre, who was the first to come here after the Dissolution of the Priory, founded this work. These buildings had been given to him by Edward (the Sixth); but Henry (the Eighth) had previously promised them to him as a reward for long military service."

In the **South Wall** are two doors, now blocked up. These led into the Cloister and were used each Sunday morning by the Canons, who went in procession after High Mass through the Eastern Door, right round the Cloister, back through the other door, and so right up the Nave to the High Altar.

## 2. THE CLOISTER

In the time of the Canons, this was the centre of the monastery. Originally it consisted of four covered passages with a square open space in the middle.



*The Nave*





*View of the Priory from the South-East*

Within these four walks the Canons spent much of their time. They would generally sit in the North side, next to the Nave of the Church, since this would be the warmest part of the Cloister. Here would stand tables and seats for writing and reading. At the bell the Canons would leave their work and go into the Church by the round-headed doorway in the North-East corner, crossing themselves with Holy Water from the stoup on the left of the door. On the right was a small cupboard, probably used for storing the books which were in general use.

On the South side of the Cloister are the remains of the **Lavatorium**, where the Canons washed before going up to the Refectory for their meals.

Many of the stones used in building the Cloister were brought here from the Roman Wall. Near the South-West corner is a stone with the Roman inscription: "C CASSI PRISCI" – "The Century of Cassius Priscus."

#### (a) The Eastern Range of the Cloister

Here was a long two-storied building, the lowest part used mainly for storage, though the portion nearest to the Church may have been the Vestry, and the room next to it the earliest Chapter House.

Above was the Dormitory, where the Canons slept on two rows of beds. (It is a mistake to think of monks or canons living alone in separate cells. Except for members of the small Carthusian Order, everyone living in a monastic house in this country lived a "community life", in which there was no privacy whatsoever). The Canons slept always in their clothes with nightcaps and bedsocks. At midnight a bell rang and the Canons got up and went in procession down the "night stairs" (now disappeared) into the Church led always by the youngest Canon bearing a lantern. After service they returned to bed, rising again in the same manner at daybreak.

Jutting out on the Eastern side of this building was the **Chapter House**. This appears to have been built considerably later than the rest of the buildings, probably after the Scottish invasions. The Canons assembled every morning in the Chapter House immediately after the First Mass. The meeting was presided over by the Prior or Sub-Prior, and began with prayer and the reading of one "chapter" of the Rule to which they had all promised obedience. After this, public confessions were made and breaches of discipline punished generally with the rod. Plans and policy were then discussed and arrangements made for the day's work. As soon as the Chapter Meeting was finished, the Canons were allowed to talk in the Cloister until Terce. It was the only time in the day when conversation was allowed.

#### (b) The Southern Range of the Cloister

On the South side of the Cloister was the **Refectory**, or dining-room, of the Canons, with cellars underneath.



*The Cellarium*



*The Prior's House*

The Refectory has now disappeared, but it once occupied the whole upper floor of this building. Here the Canons had their meals — dinner about noon, supper in the evening, and “collation,” which was just a drink, before Compline. Breakfast appears to have been unknown. The Canons ate nothing until mid-day. At the Eastern end of the Refectory was the High Table, where the Prior or Sub-Prior sat, together with any visitors and such of the Canons as he might invite to sit with him. The rest sat at two tables running at right angles to the High Table.

Dinner consisted of two courses, but it is difficult to know just what they were. The first was probably a kind of broth, and the second meat or fish with bread and vegetables. Beer was drunk in large quantities (the monks of Abingdon were rationed at twenty-four pints a day each!), but on special occasions wine was served. Supper would be much the same as dinner.

All meals were eaten in silence while one of the brethren read from the Bible or some theological book. The reader stood in the pulpit about half-way down the room.

The food was cooked and served by hired men, for every monastery employed a considerable number of servants.

Below the Refectory is the Cellarium, where food was stored. This is one of

the most interesting parts of the ruins, giving a very good impression of what the place originally looked like. When the buildings were complete, something of this kind probably ran round three sides of the Cloister.

The Cellarium now contains some specimens of medieval carving from the ruins, and also a number of Roman altars brought from the Wall or from some neighbouring camp, such as Camboglanna (Birdoswald.) Several of these altars are in a fine state of preservation. One is dedicated to Silvanus, the god of the woods, and another to Cocidius, the British name for the god of war. On the top of many of them can be seen the hollow where incense was burnt. In the days of persecution, Christians were ordered to sprinkle a little incense on such altars as these.

Note the masons' marks scratched on the stones of the roof. Each mason had his own emblem which he inscribed on each stone that he cut. Any flaw could then be traced to the man responsible.

### (c) The Western Range of the Cloister

The ground floor of this was probably vaulted (as in the Cellarium) and used for storage. Upstairs would be the servants' quarters, offices of various kinds, perhaps the Library, and the Chamberlain's store-room, where the clothes and bedding were kept.

It is difficult to know exactly how the Canons were dressed, but the following information may be of interest. An Augustinian Canon of Oxford in 1515 wore a black cassock lined with fur, a white rochet (a kind of long surplice) and a black cloak and hood. At the Augustinian house at Barnwell, near Cambridge, each Canon received the following outfit every year. At Easter he was given one surplice, one sheet, three pairs of linen breeches, one pair of summer hose of soft leather, one pair of leather shoes, a pair of gaiters of serge or canvas, and a cope of frieze (woollen cloth) without fur. At Michaelmas he received a tunic of wool, one cassock lined with fur, one pair of hose of soft leather, one pair of woollen gaiters, two pairs of woollen shoes (i.e. bed-socks), and a lambskin. No doubt the Canons of Lanercost had much the same as this.

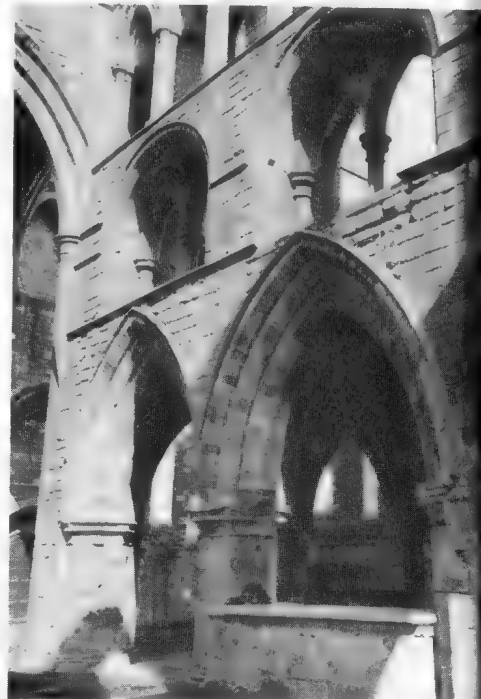
Occasionally a set of rooms, probably in the Western range, was allotted to an ex-Prior who had retired. On December 10th, 1354, the Bishop of Carlisle visited Lanercost and gave orders for the accommodation of Prior John de Bothecastre, who had resigned. He was to have suitable apartments, two rations of food each day, 46s. 8d. a year for clothes, and a servant to look after him.

At the Southern end of this building is the Prior's House. Both this and the rest of this block were considerably altered at the Dissolution, when they were converted into a private dwelling house for the Dacres.





*Above: A view of the North Transept. Right: The Chapel in the North Transept. Below: The tomb of Sir Rowland de Vaux.*



## 2. THE CHOIR, TRANSEPTS AND SANCTUARY

The door from the Cloister leads into the **South Transept** of the Church. Here originally stood the Chapel of Saint Catherine. Here also is the Tomb of Sir Thomas Dacre, who died in 1525, having fought at Flodden in 1513 and been created a Knight of the Garter. In 1506 he married Elizabeth of Greystoke, thus adding the Morpeth and Castle Howard properties to the Dacre Estates. On the North side of the tomb are the Dacre arms and the motto, "Forte en Loialte", (i.e., "Strong in Loyalty".) On the South side are the Greystoke arms.

On the South side of this Chapel are the remains of a Dacre tomb, but the effigy has been mutilated. In 1709 a man called John Crow died, and his name was carved here. Tradition says that he fell while climbing in the ruins.

Next come the ruins of the **Choir and Sanctuary**. At the East end, on the raised step, stood the High Altar, with an aumbry in the wall behind it. Along the length of the Choir were the Canons' stalls, as may be seen nowadays in any Cathedral Church. Being made of wood, they were destroyed several times when the Church was set on fire. Here the Canons assembled seven times a day for their worship. On Sundays the services were most elaborate, including the great Procession round the Cloister and up the Nave of the Church.

The Chapel in the **North Transept** was probably the Lady Chapel. This now contains the graves of several members of the Howard family, including the ninth Earl of Carlisle, an eminent artist, and his wife, Rosalind, who was well-known as a social reformer.

Here also stands another fine tomb of the fifteenth century, that of Sir Humphry Dacre, Lord Warden of the Marches, who died on May 30th, 1485. His wife, Mabel Parr, was an aunt of Henry VIII's last wife, Catherine Parr.

On the North wall of the North Transept is the oldest tomb in the building, that of Sir Rowland de Vaux, Lord of Triermain, and a nephew of Sir Robert de Vaux, who founded the Priory. At one time his tomb bore the following painted inscription:—

"Rowland vaux that laitlie was the lord of Tridermaine is dead,  
his bodie in lead, and low lyes under this stane."

This must have been written some centuries after Sir Rowland's death.

Unfortunately, there is no record of the burial of Sir Robert de Vaux, the founder of this place. But we end this guide with a word of gratitude to him and to all other benefactors who have contributed towards the buildings, and upkeep of this House of God, as well as to those who, for nearly eight hundred years, have kept burning here the torch of praise.



*The tomb of Sir Thomas Dacre*

### 1.—THE MONASTIC TIME-TABLE

WINTER.	SUMMER.	
Midnight.	Midnight.	MATTINS and LAUDS.
1-30-7-0	1-30-5-0	Sleep.
7-0	5-0	PRIME and FIRST MASS.
8-0	6-0	Chapter Meeting and work until—
9-0	9-0	TERCE.
10-0	10-0	HIGH MASS.
11-0	11-0	Sext and reading until—
Noon	Noon	Dinner, followed by work in Winter and sleep in Summer until—
2-30	4-0	NONE and work until—
4-30	6-30	EVENSONG.
5-0	7-0	Supper and (in Summer) reading until—
5-30	8-30	COLLATION.
6-0	9-0	COMPLINE.
7-0-12-0	10-0-12-0	Sleep.

NOTE.— The above times are only approximate, as they varied throughout the year.

### II.—PRIORS OF LANERCOST

c. 1181-4	Symon.	1354-55	Thomas de Hexham.
1220	John.	1355-?	Richard de Ridale.



*Sunset at Lanercost*

1256	Walter.	1379	Peter Frost.
c. 1271-83	John of Galloway.	1380	John.
1283	Symon de Drifffield.	c. 1385-90	William.
c. 1310	Henry de Burgo.	1434	Alexander Walton.
1315	Robert de Meburne.	1455	John Messemby.
?-1337	William de Southayk.	1465	John Werke.
1337-38	John de Bowethby.	1492	Richard Cokke.
1338-54	John de Bothecastre.	c. 1534-36	John Robyson.

### III.—VICARS OF LANERCOST

1666	Samuel Constantyne.	1845-73	Isaac Dodgson.
1667-68	George Cowper.	1873-79	Edward W. Chapman.
1668-79	William Birkett.	1879-90	H. J. Bulkeley.
1679-81	Thomas Bell.	1890-96	H. Whitehead.
1686-1726	William Dickinson.	1897-1920	Thomas W. Willis.
1726-30	Anthony Wilton	1920-31	Aubrey P. Durrant.
1731-46	Thomas Fawcett.	1932-44	W. R. N. Naylor.
1746-61	George Story.	1945-46	John R. H. Moorman.
1761-74	William Wilson.	1946-55	Robert Lindsay.
1774-86	William Townley.	1955-62	John K. Greg.
1786-1845	George Gilbanks.	1962	Wilfrid Braithwaite.



#### IV.—AUTHORITIES

- (1) The CHRONICON DE LANERCOST tells us very little of the history of the place. It is a general chronicle of events from 1202 to 1346, and was originally written by two Franciscan Friars. It was afterwards revised by a Canon or Canons of Lanercost, who made certain additions to it. It is now in the British Museum. It was edited by Joseph Stevenson for the Maitland and Bannatyne Clubs in 1839. Part of it was translated by Sir Herbert Maxwell in 1913.
- (2) The LANERCOST CHARTULARY, which was once at Naworth Castle, has been lost. Fortunately, a transcript was made in the eighteenth century, and is now in the Library of the Dean and Chapter of Carlisle. An account of it appeared in the TRANSACTIONS of the Royal Society of Literature in 1866.
- (3) A HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL ACCOUNT OF LANERCOST by R. S. and C. J. Ferguson.
- (4) Various articles in the TRANSACTIONS of the Cumberland and Westmorland Archaeological Society, including:—  

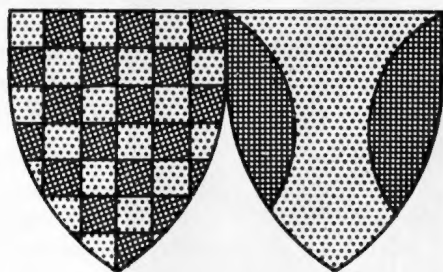
THE HERALDRY OF LANERCOST, by R. S. Ferguson.  
 LANERCOST FOUNDATION CHARTER, by T. H. B. Graham.  
 THE PRIORY OF LANERCOST, by J. H. Martindale.  
 A note on the FOUNDATION OF LANERCOST PRIORY, by J. C. Dickinson.  
 THE ESTATES OF THE LANERCOST CANONS, with some notes on the history of the Priory, by J. R. H. Moorman.
- (5) Dr. Wilson's article on Lanercost in the VICTORIA COUNTY HISTORIES, Cumberland, vol. ii.
- (6) A GUIDE TO LANERCOST PRIORY by T. W. Willis.
- (7) EDWARD I AT LANERCOST PRIORY, 1306-7 by J. R. H. MOORMAN in the "ENGLISH HISTORICAL REVIEW", 1952.



*The Choir and South Transept*



*Tomb of Elizabeth Dacre Howard*



### **"THE FLORAL BORDER IN THE GARDEN OF HISTORY"**

Such is Moncreiffe's description of heraldry and the use of such a "border" is singularly appropriate in a mediaeval Church, for it was during the first half of the 12th century, about the time when Lanercost Priory was founded, that knights began to bear bold devices to identify themselves in battle or in the lists. The emblems were painted on the linen surcoats which the knights wore over their armour, giving us the term "coat of arms." The peculiar devices became family possessions and their form and use was developed into a system.

The eighteen emblems on the new curtains at the West end of the Priory form a summary of the Priory's eight hundred year old story. Reading from top left to right on each curtain there are the following arms:—

1. The Province of York: a red field with crossed silver keys and a crown. Theodore of Canterbury organised the Church in England into the Provinces of Canterbury and York whilst Wilfrid was Bishop or overseer of the Northern part of England. Canterbury was recognised as the chief province by A.D. 674. (The sister Priory of Hexham has many connections with Wilfrid and the crypt and apse of his Church there may still be seen beneath Hexham Priory.) The Provinces were divided into Dioceses and the Dioceses into Parishes. Lanercost is therefore in the Diocese of Carlisle in the Province of York.

2. Robert de Vaux (or Vallibus) founded the Priory in c. 1166 by the gift of cultivable clearings (lawns, landa or llans) in the woodlands. His coat is made



up of gold and red checks. The arms also commemorate other members of the family who were benefactors of Lanercost.

3. The Vaux family had also founded Pentney Priory in Norfolk and it is likely that the first canons of Lanercost came from there. The Pentney arms are three mediaeval baskets in gold on a red field.

4. In 1169, the bishopric of Carlisle being vacant, Bishop Christian of Candida Casa (Whithorn) in Scotland consecrated the Church. He is commemorated by the three gold covered chalices on a red field.

5. Next and centrally are the arms of Lanercost, red flanches on a gold field.

6. Ada Engayne formerly wife of Simon de Morville, married Robert de Vallibus. She had long been well disposed towards Lanercost and gave further gifts of land. Her emblem was a red shield with a fess wavy in gold and six gold crosses pointed.

7. The Multons' badge of a silver shield with three red bars commemorate their benefactions.

8. The blue shield with the gold fretty and fleur de lis is that of the





Morville family which gave land on Burgh Marsh with other rights.

9. Sylvester de Everdon, Bishop of Carlisle 1247–55, gave the “alterage” of Walton and Farlam and his emblem was a silver shield with a green tree.

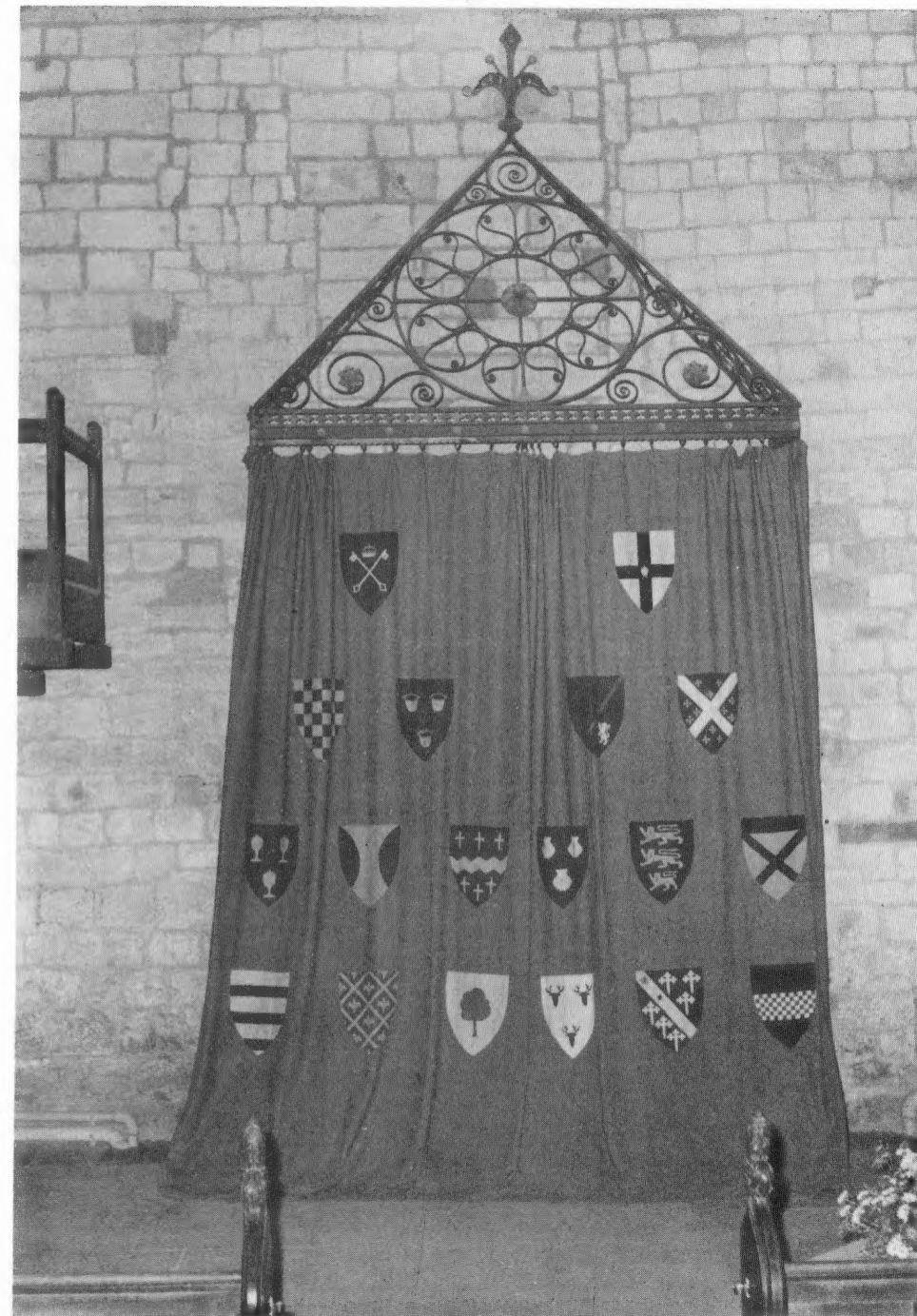
10. The arms of the Carlisle Diocese balance those of York Province on the opposite curtain and they are a silver shield with a black cross upon which is a silver mitre with gold labels.

11. The silver lion and blue bendlet on a red field are the arms of Peter de Tilliol, lord of the manor of Scaleby, who was a benefactor of the Priory.

12. Walter de Wyndesore also extended the lands of the Priory by his gifts and his is the red shield with the silver saltire and twelve gold cross-crosslets.

13. The familiar silver escallop shells on a red field of Dacre signify the large part the Dacre family played in the history of the immediate neighbourhood both before and after the Dissolution of the Priory in 1536.

14 and 15. The arms of Edward I, three gold leopards or lions on a red field signify the disruption of the Priory’s peace and prosperity. Edward’s sojourns at Lanercost in his war against the Scots to claim Scotland’s crown invoked the wrath of the Scots under Wallace and the Bruces. The unwelcome visits of King Robert



*The heraldic curtains at the West Door  
of Lanercost Priory*

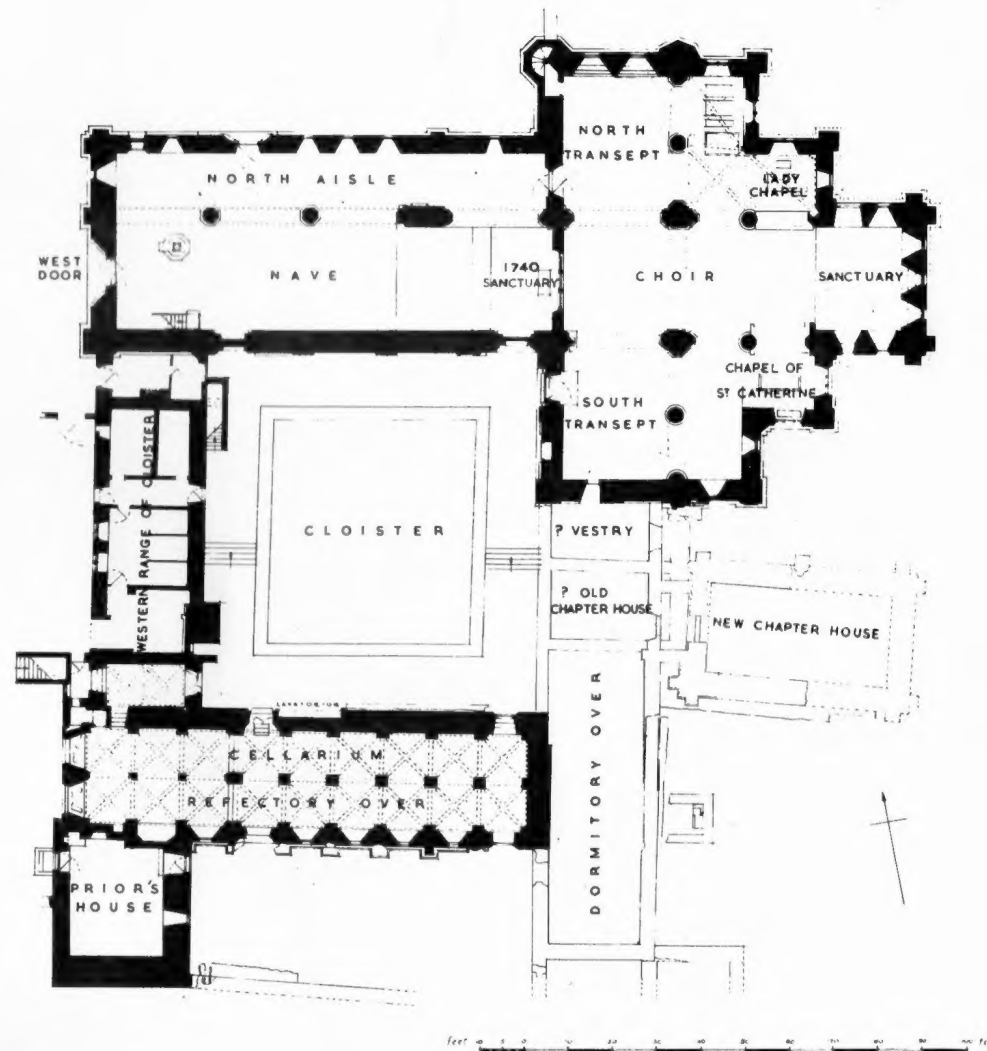
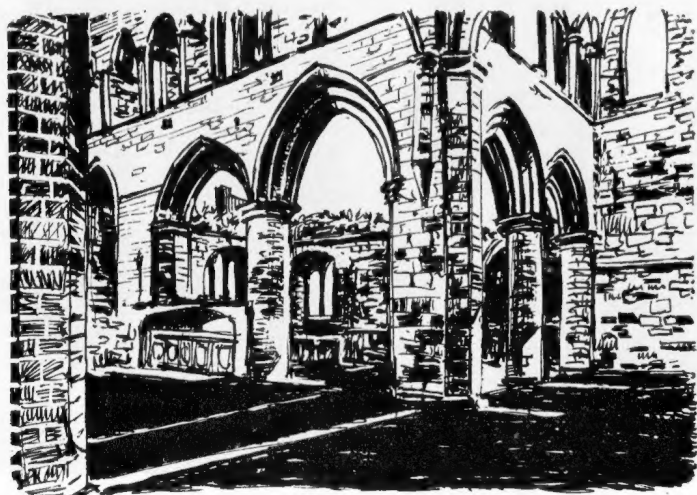
"The Bruce", and King David II are recorded by the red saltire and chief on a gold field.

16. Archbishop Bowet of York in 1409 granted "Letters of Quest" to enable the Prior and Canons of Lanercost to appeal to the faithful in the Northern Province for financial help. Three black stags' heads on a silver field make the arms of this notable Archbishop.

17. The heraldic record should be incomplete without the emblem of Lord William Howard, devout and scholarly able administrator of estates, strong in battle and firm in principles and an archaeologist of discernment. The Howard arms with its red field, silver bend and six silver cross-crosslets pointed and its golden escutcheon with the demi-lion of Scotland pierced with an arrow – the honourable augmentation after Flodden Field (1513) – also bears the cadency mark of a black mullet to indicate that Lord William was the third son of Thomas, 4th Duke of Norfolk. This shield is a tribute also to the descendants of Howard who in latter years furnished the Church with pews, organ and barrel vaulted roof completing the essential restoration of that part of the Church which had from its foundation been the Parishioners' place of worship.

18. The last coat dates the work of making the curtains and balances the design – it is the Lindsay coat of arms – a red shield with a fess check of six in blue and silver.

The curtains were made by parishioners and together with the North Door Curtains were dedicated to God's honour and "for the adornment, comfort and dignity" of Lanercost Priory on S. Mary Magdelene's Day, 22nd July, 1954.



LANERCOST PRIORY

Designed and printed by the Pacific Press,  
Gilsland, Cumbria and Kingsley, Hants





Lanercost Priory, from a painting by Wilfrid Braithwaite